



Corporate Plan 2012-13

Our mission is to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.

Foreword



Caroline Spelman MP
Secretary of State

This Corporate Plan commits the Forestry Commission, through its GB work, to ensure that the nation's trees and woodlands contribute to a sustainable green economy. In addition, the plan will support delivery of three of Defra's Structural Reform priorities.

The threat from pests and diseases remains acute, and we will step up our efforts to ensure that trees and woods remain resilient and healthy. Our work with Forest Research, Defra and Fera colleagues, and the wider sector implementing the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan will support these objectives over the coming years. The signing of two recent Memorandums with Kew and Fera will ensure that resources and capabilities are well aligned, and utilised to best effect.

Later this year, the report of the Independent Panel on Forestry in England will give us real foresight on how woodlands can be better for people, nature and the economy. In parallel, we are considering the recommendations of the Forestry Regulation Task Force. The desire for reduced regulation and a proper appreciation of ecosystem services and benefits provided by forests and woodlands remain Government priorities. We will continue to develop standards for our forests that meet the highest standards of sustainability at an international level whilst supporting a thriving and dynamic forestry sector at home.

The year ahead will also see changes to the delivery landscape across Great Britain as devolved administrations explore new ways of working. As these changes unfold, we will work across the countries to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements.

Our trees and woodlands have always played an important part in our lives and culture. I want to see them continuing to fulfil this role through the actions set out in this plan.

Chair's Introduction

Pam Warhurst

Chair of the Forestry Commissioners

The expertise, commitment and quality of the work carried out by the Forestry Commission remains as important to British society as ever. Sustainable management of our forests, underpinned by the new UK Forestry Standard, will help to grow a greener economy, improve our quality of life and protect our natural environment now and for future generations.

Last year we made major changes to meet the challenges of the spending review. These are now in place. The creation of a new Single Body in Wales will mean adapting our organisation further. Yet we will remain focussed on the priority areas in this plan and providing best value to our customers and wider society.

Our research capability has been examined in detail during the last 12 months. We conducted a thorough review of our own processes and reduced the cost of research commissioning. This year we will consider the recommendations from the External Review of Science Quality in Forest Research and refresh the Science and Innovation Strategy. We remain committed to cutting edge research that directly supports

British forestry and woodland management.

Our forests and trees are facing unprecedented levels of attack by new pests and diseases. The launch of our interim Plant Health Strategy last year sets out how we will address these threats and complements the Government's Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan, developed with many of our colleagues from the private and NGO sectors.

The new National Forest Inventory map of British forests is the most reliable assessment of all Britain's forests. This year we will produce forecasts of future timber production, biomass estimates, and woody carbon statistics to support the growth and development of Britain's wood and timber using industries.

All of this work will help us ensure Britain's forests and woodlands respond to the many challenges we face and provide the benefits and services which our society values so highly. But we cannot do it alone – the contribution of communities, businesses, voluntary groups and the forest sector has never mattered more.



The Government's Vision

Sustainable forest management remains at the heart of forestry policy across Great Britain

The government in England, along with those in Scotland and Wales, shares a common vision of forestry contributing to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of each nation. What this means in practice is that we must reflect the different policies and priorities in each country.

The legal basis for the Forestry Commission is the Forestry Act 1967. It sets out the composition of the Commissioners, the purpose of the Commission and the functions of national and international significance that it is responsible for. The Forestry Commission at GB level is a Non-Ministerial Department, and is responsible to each of the three devolved administrations.

Our key priorities for the coming year are set out below.



Forest Biosecurity

Protecting our forests and trees from pests and diseases remains a major area of challenge. Through collaboration with Defra, Fera, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, industry and private business representatives, and NGOs such as the Woodland Trust and National Trust, we now have a comprehensive action plan for tree health and plant biosecurity, which was launched by the Secretary of State in October 2011.

The plan has four major workstreams: Protecting the UK - Import Controls, Public and stakeholder engagement, Practical Actions, and Research Opportunities and Evidence. With our partners, we will implement the action plan, and carefully monitor the health and resilience of our forests, woodlands, and trees.



Indicators:

- Number of new tree pests and diseases established in the last 10 years.
- Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports.
- Meet our customer-care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next-again working day.
- Percentage of the research budget committed to biosecurity

Key Actions:

- Improve horizon scanning to identify new threats, develop contingency plans, and introduce controls to prevent accidental introduction from imports and other pathways.
- Work with partners to deliver a cross-border tree health strategy and the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity action plan.
- Develop a risk framework with a range of criteria to enable strategic prioritisation of practical actions on tree pests and pathogens.
- Support continued investment in research and work with partners such as Defra, and through the Living With Environmental Change partnership to develop a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary research programme.

Case Study: Dealing with the threat from Oak Processionary Moth

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) has been newly detected at four separate sites in Britain over the last seven years. In each case the pest was traced back to large imported oak trees that were likely to have been infested at the time of planting. While the caterpillars and nests of OPM are highly visible, its eggs are very hard to detect and these can overwinter on plants for planting.

The first outbreak of OPM was detected in Ealing, west London in 2006. In 2008 Britain introduced legislative controls that have been largely successful in preventing further importations of infested oak. However, by 2010 the pest had become established across five boroughs in West London, despite efforts to control it and on the advice of the Forestry Commission and Forest Research, Ministers agreed to move to a policy of containment in these areas of London, together with continued eradication of new introductions elsewhere.

There is only one other significant outbreak of OPM at Pangbourne, near Reading. We are working to achieve eradication at Pangbourne and believe this is possible because the outbreak was detected at an early stage in 2010 and only 26 trees were found to be infested in 2011. We are working closely with the local authority to monitor the situation.

Our approach to dealing with OPM is underpinned by evidence and advice provided by our scientists working in Forest Research and by other evidence that will emerge from new research funded against the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan. We have learnt much from the outbreak in west London and appreciate how owners and managers of trees have made great efforts to control the pest, often involving personal cost. The success of any strategy to deal with a tree pest is assisted by the vigilance of members of the public and the continuing support from owners and managers of trees.

The Forestry Commission will continue to work with colleagues in the Food and Environment Research Agency to pursue legislative controls at European level and to eradicate any new outbreaks of OPM.



Climate Change

There is authoritative evidence that forestry has a significant role to play in helping to tackle climate change in the UK. Trees and woodlands take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere as they grow, and wood products offer the potential to substitute for fossil fuel intensive fuels and materials. Woodlands also provide a means of helping us adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change; for example, by contributing to flood control and providing shade in towns and cities.

The evidence and analysis in the 2009 Read Report showed how increasing levels of woodland creation in Great Britain could help to meet policy objectives related to climate change. Since 2010, a Woodland Carbon Task Force – led by FC England - has been working to see how higher levels of woodland creation could be achieved. The remit of the Task Force focuses on England but its work has implications for forestry across Great Britain.

With the launch of the Woodland Carbon Code during 2011, there is now a mechanism to underpin market confidence in the capacity of woodlands to deliver carbon dioxide abatement. The amendment to the Government's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Guidelines last year now allows clearer reporting of the contribution of woodland creation in the UK. We will continue to promote use of the Code during 2012.



Indicators:

- Projected amount of CO₂ captured to 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code -approved British woodlands

Key Actions:

- Further increase the area of new planting approved under the Woodland Carbon Code
- Continue research and analysis of forestry's role in helping to tackle climate change, from natural science and socio-economic perspectives.
- Work with experts in and beyond the forest sector to examine opportunities for new funding mechanisms for woodland creation and to encourage forestry's contribution to a green economy.
- Produce scenarios of above-ground future carbon production, including using data from the National Forest Inventory.

Case Study – Innovation for the green economy

A range of measures is likely to be needed in order to achieve higher levels of woodland creation in future. In addition to providing transparent information and standards, for example through the Woodland Carbon Code, we are examining whether new funding models and financial instruments can be developed in order to incentivise the woodland creation market in the UK.

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment published in 2011 demonstrated the many benefits provided by natural capital such as woodlands and other land-uses. We will investigate the potential to find ways of releasing these values through market mechanisms, and whether additional income streams can be generated for land owners and managers who provide such benefits. The initial focus of such ‘payments for ecosystem services’ has been on abatement of carbon dioxide, but other potential benefits include the regulation of water flows, improvements in water quality and gains to biodiversity.

Through the Woodland Carbon Task Force, we have commissioned a study on ‘Future Funding Models for Woodland Creation’. The report identified ‘enabling’ mechanisms that could stimulate the market; for example, by bringing together land managers and investors in the forest carbon market and providing data on investment impacts to investors. The report also identified specific funding instruments that could incentivise investment. We will continue to develop, and where possible pilot, proposals that are emerging both from this report and from other discussions with experts and stakeholders in the forestry and ecosystem service markets.

To accommodate the wide diversity of interests in the woodland creation market, we will need to apply different mechanisms and instruments in different woodland creation settings.



Standards

The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) sets out our approach to sustainable forest management. The UKFS delivers our international obligations and was extensively revised and re-issued in November 2011. Based on internationally recognised science and best practice, the UKFS serves as an exemplar of self-regulation to further both our international and domestic priorities.



Indicators:

- The number of felling licences and forest plans approved each year under the UKFS and the total areas of woodland captured under these plans.

Key Actions:

- Deliver a comprehensive training package to ensure that the new UKFS is embedded in UK forestry practice
- Develop quick start guidance for the UKFS to ease adoption
- Support the review of country-level approaches to the implementation of the UKFS in the light of the revision.
- Work with colleagues in FC (England) to explore how the UKFS can be used to deliver light-touch but robust regulation through piloting a system of earned recognition for the English forestry sector.
- Ensure that the implementation of the proposed EU Due Diligence regulation is aligned with the UKFS.
- Ensure that emerging criteria for sustainable biomass are aligned with the UKFS
- By the end of 2013, develop an independent measure of the implementation of the UKFS and Guidelines.

Case Study - Promoting Sustainable Forest Management Domestically and Internationally

The UK Forestry Standard is the framework within which existing regulations and incentives are applied and it ensures that forestry activities are supported and influenced to deliver the full range of public benefits. As the centrepiece of our approach we will use the Standard in the following ways:

- To promote sustainable forest management in our international work – for example in the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration.
- To define UK forestry practice and deliver the UK commitment to sustainable forest management. The Standard ensures that international agreements and conventions on topics such as sustainable forest management, climate change, biodiversity and the protection of water resources are robustly applied here in the UK.
- To underpin the delivery of regulation that is informed by a balanced approach to risk, compliance and good practice. We will work to minimise additional burdens on the sector in implementing the EU timber regulation and criteria for sustainable biomass.

- To ensure forestry incentives buy the benefits which lie at the heart of the UKFS, balancing the environmental, economic and social benefits of forests and the recognition that our forests serve a wide range of objectives.
- To support other Government departments in developing policy where forestry related issues can add value.

The UK has a number of strategic international objectives and obligations in the areas of forests, climate change, the natural environment, and poverty reduction. The Forestry Commission will continue to play a leading role in promoting the sustainable management of forests globally, through sharing UK experience with other countries on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Within the European Union we will assist in representing the UK Government and, in particular, by bringing our wealth of practical expertise and international standing as a national forest service to bear.



Evidence

Effective policy and operational practice requires a robust evidence base. We provide this through our commissioned programmes of research, which are developed in conjunction with the devolved administrations and our stakeholders.

Our work providing a robust evidence base includes the National Forest Inventory, a definitive assessment of Britain's woodlands. We also are responsible for providing facts and figures as Official Statistics. We work, as far as possible, in partnership with other organisations to obtain leverage for our core funding.



Indicators:

- The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.
- The amount of leverage obtained from FC research resources.
- Published metrics on deliverables arising from the Science and Innovation Strategy
- National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.

Key Actions:

- Conduct a full review of the Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry
- Direct and manage research programmes relevant to the forestry sector, and disseminate results.
- Respond to the recommendations of the External Review of Forest Research Agency
- Develop appropriate new measures of performance to assess the quality of our research against
- Develop close partnership working with other government departments and external organisations to leverage our research spend.
- Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public.
- Publish maps, forecasts, and analysis from the National Forest Inventory.

Case Studies

Woodland Birds

The populations of several woodland birds have recently declined across Britain, especially in broadleaved woods. This is thought to be due to changes in vegetation structure, particularly the loss of low, understorey vegetation. The likely causes are reduced levels of woodland management (e.g. thinning, coppicing) which appear to have resulted in heavier shading; and increased numbers of both native and non-native deer which have led to more browsing.

In partnership with Defra, we have recently commissioned a new research project to improve our knowledge of the habitat needs of declining woodland birds. The project is investigating how habitat quality for woodland birds is affected by woodland



management and deer browsing by undertaking a large-scale survey of lowland broadleaved woodland in the UK. This will be complemented by a reference survey of upland conifer woodlands where populations of the target bird species have remained more stable.

Natural flood management project: Slowing the flow at Pickering

Slowing the Flow at Pickering is a partnership project, which is led by Forest Research, closely supported by Forestry Commission England, The Environment Agency, The North York Moors National Park Authority, Durham University, Natural England and the wider community, with funding from the Forestry Commission and Defra. The project seeks to demonstrate how better land management can help to reduce the flooding problem faced by Pickering in North Yorkshire, in common with many other towns and cities across the country.

Flooding appears to be an increasingly common event and one that could get even worse with climate change. Pickering has been flooded four times in the last 10 years, with the last flood the most serious to date, causing damage to homes and businesses valued at approximately £7m. The new approach to flood management relies on making

changes to the way the landscape is managed, so that the passage of rainfall to rivers and its movement downstream is reduced and delayed. There is a great deal of public interest in the project with active participation by local people and organisations.



Ways of Working

During the last year, we have made major changes to deliver our commitments under the Spending Review. These are now in place, and we are reshaping our work to ensure that the resources we deploy provide best value to our customers and wider society.

In this changing environment, we will ensure that people have the opportunity to develop the right skills, knowledge and professional competencies to carry out their roles as effectively as possible. Our ambition is to have a diverse workforce that reflects the society that we serve. We will continue to be an organisation committed to high levels of employee engagement, motivation and achievement, and one that openly encourages participation, personal development and which values its staff.

We will continue to:

- work across government and the sector to reduce the impact and threat of damaging tree pests and diseases
- develop and set standards; on biomass, on sustainability, on forest management, and in other areas
- commission key research and evidence; for policy and operational purposes, and ensure it reaches our customers who can make best use of it
- ensure that the forestry sector can contribute fully to the UK's climate change commitments

Our analysts will continue to provide specialist advice and support in all of these areas to complement the expertise within the country administrations. They will also take a wider perspective to deliver a shared research agenda and provide robust, expert, and impartial advice about changes in EU legislation affecting GB, and any other devolved implications for forestry.

Plant health remains a major priority, and we will strengthen the capacity of our plant health service to allow us:

- to support forest managers and the public in tackling the challenges posed by new outbreaks
- to drive changes to EU plant health rules for better protection of our borders; and
- to deliver the joint FC/Defra Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan

We will also continue to support and deliver the Forestry Commission's statutory functions as a GB body.

Indicators:

- Number of staff (full-time equivalents).
- Total spend on GB activities.

Key Actions:

- Work with FC England and Defra to provide a more integrated and streamlined approach to our GB and England functions.
- Work to deal with the transfer of functions in Wales to the new Single Body to ensure that business continuity for the remainder of FC remains a priority.
- Reduce staff numbers and examine and implement other cost-saving measures to deliver the most cost-effective service possible.
- Explore innovative ways of increasing the leverage for our resources.
- Continue to roll out our Environmental Management System to ensure that we maintain accreditation to ISO 14001:2004 and can demonstrate positive impacts from its implementation.

Annex A: Indicators and Actions

Delivery Priority	Indicators	Key Actions
Forest Biosecurity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of new tree pests and diseases established in the last 10 years 2. Number of interceptions of non-compliant imports 3. Percentage of the research budget committed to biosecurity 4. Meet our customer-care target of inspecting 95 per cent of imports of wood and wood products on the day of notification of landing, or the next again working day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve horizon scanning to identify new threats, develop contingency plans and introduce controls to prevent accidental introduction from imports and other pathways. • Work with partners to deliver a cross-border tree health strategy and forest biosecurity action plan. • Develop a risk framework with a range of criteria to enable strategic prioritisation of practical actions on tree pests and pathogens. • Support continued investment in research and work with partners to develop a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary research programme.
Climate Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Projected amount of CO₂ captured to 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code approved British woodlands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further increase the area of new planting approved under the Woodland Carbon Code • Continue research and analysis of forestry's role in helping to tackle climate change, from natural science and socio-economic perspectives. • Work with experts in and beyond the forest sector to examine opportunities for new funding mechanisms for woodland creation and to encourage forestry's contribution to a green economy. • Produce scenarios of above-ground future carbon production, including using data from the National Forest Inventory.

Annex A: Indicators and Actions (Cont.)

Delivery Priority	Indicators	Key Actions
Standards	6. The number of felling licences and forest plans approved each year under the UKFS and the total areas of woodland captured under these plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a comprehensive training package to ensure that the new UKFS is embedded in UK forestry practice • Develop quick start guidance for the UKFS to ease adoption • Work with colleagues in FC (England) to explore how the UKFS can be used to deliver light-touch but robust regulation through piloting a system of earned recognition for the English forestry sector. • Ensure that the implementation of the proposed EU Due Diligence regulation is aligned with the UKFS. • Ensure criteria for sustainable biomass are aligned with the UKFS • By the end of 2013, develop an independent measure of the implementation of the UKFS and Guidelines. • Review country-level approaches to the implementation of the UKFS in the light of the revision.
Evidence	<p>7. The proportion of funds spent on research delivery against commissioning costs.</p> <p>8. The amount of leverage obtained from FC research resources.</p> <p>9. Published metrics on deliverables arising from the Science and Innovation Strategy</p> <p>10. National Forest Inventory sample plots against target number required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a full review of the Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry • Direct and manage research programmes relevant to the forestry sector, and disseminate results. • Respond to the recommendations of the External Review of the Forest Research Agency. • Develop close partnership working with other government departments and external organisations to leverage our research spend. • Develop appropriate new measures of performance to assess the quality of our research against • Provide timely and accurate official statistics (including National Statistics) on the forestry sector, such as forest area, timber volume, biomass and carbon stored, to inform trade and industry, government and the general public. • Publish maps, forecasts, and analysis from the National Forest Inventory.

Annex A: Indicators and Actions (Cont.)

Delivery Priority	Indicators	Key Actions
Ways of Working	11. Number of staff (full-time equivalents). 12. Total spend on GB activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with FC England and Defra to provide a more integrated and streamlined approach to our GB and England functions. • Work to deal with the transfer of functions in Wales to the new Single Body to ensure that business continuity for the remainder of FC remains a priority. • Reduce staff numbers and examine and implement other cost-saving measures to deliver the most cost-effective service possible. • Explore innovative ways of increasing the leverage for our resources. • Continue to roll out our Environmental Management System to ensure that we maintain accreditation to ISO 14001:2004 and can demonstrate positive impacts from its implementation.

Annex B: Source and Use of Funds

£ million		2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Planned	2013-14 Indicative	2014-15 Indicative
Source of Funds					
Parliamentary Funding	Resource	18.793	14.205	13.203	12.197
	Capital	1.407	1.341	1.341	1.341
	Total	20.200	15.546	14.544	13.538
Use of Funds					
GB Activities	Research ¹	11.221	10.470	9.492	8.632
	Analysts ²	1.208	0.966	0.966	0.966
	Plant Health ³	0.699	0.694	0.689	0.692
	Corporate Services	4.925	1.436	1.575	1.575
	Other ^{4,5}	2.147	1.980	1.822	1.673
	Total	20.200	15.546	14.544	13.538
Staff Numbers ⁶		44.9	34.8	34.8	34.8

Notes:

1. Purchase of research to deliver the Science and Innovation Strategy for British Forestry*
2. Analysts Group (Standards, evidence, climate change, statistics, economics, publications)**
3. Plant Health Service *Includes Biosecurity research **Includes strategic direction for tree health
4. Includes depreciation of assets, mainly office machinery and equipment and amortisation of capitalised software costs.
5. Figures for all years revised from previous plans to reflect the switch of GLOS development costs from GB to FC England.
6. Figures for 2012 onwards include one post jointly funded by FCGB and the three devolved administrations.

The Forestry Commission is a non-ministerial department responsible to each of the devolved administrations. Forestry Commission Great Britain delivers agreed cross-border functions and reports to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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